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Ford gives Bush the job of polishing CIA image

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'Outsider' may return agency to former role

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Washington

President Ford's nomination of George Bush, U.S. envoy to Peking, to be director of the Central Intelligence Agency may be the beginning of a new image for America's top spy agency.

His confirmation will be rough going for the former United Nations ambassador since his new command is so closely linked to the Senate and House investigations of U.S. spy work.

But, if appointed, his position will follow one of the key recommendations of the Rockefeller Commission, which reported in June that "consideration should be given to individuals from outside the career service of the CIA."

Experience in intelligence service is not necessarily a prerequisite."

Indeed, Mr. Bush's background is more political. He twice ran for the House and won, twice ran for the Senate and lost, and was named chairman of the Republican National Committee just as the Watergate revelations began to break.

He follows a 30-year line of CIA directors — James R. Schlesinger excepted — with career roots in an agency noted for worldwide action. Mr. Bush, at the urging of Congress, may return the CIA to its originally designated role of sifting and evaluating evidence for policy-makers.

Morale at the CIA has eroded, according to William Nelson, deputy director of operations, after a year of intelligence leaks.

"The structure is becoming more fragile. Foreign agents are coming to us and saying the U.S. is not capable of keeping secrets and that they won't deal with us anymore," he

said. "People under jeopardy are backing away."

[In a related action, Army Lt. Gen. Daniel Graham has resigned as chief of the Defense Intelligence Agency. According to a Reuter report from Washington, General Graham's leaving was linked directly to the firing of Defense Secretary Schlesinger.]

Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee Otis Pike (D) of New York criticizes the choice of Mr. Bush for the possible "politicizing" of the CIA that could evolve. "What I see as going wrong with the CIA was not when the pros at the agency were left

alone," Mr. Pike said. "Where they got into trouble was when the pros were told to do something by the politicians."

Despite the firing of CIA Director William Colby, the CIA is "still functioning effectively," said Mr. Nelson. But he urged the quick reorganization of the CIA and the establishment of a joint congressional oversight committee.

How Mr. Bush, a former congressman, will deal with the two investigations now one-third finished on Capitol Hill depends on President Ford's willingness to furnish further classified documents.